اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا

Quran English Translation and Tafseer

Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah 73 – Al-Muzammil (The One Who is Covered Up)

سُوْرَةُ الْمُزَّمِّلِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate)

يٰٓاَيُّهَا الْمُزَّمِّلُ ۙ١

(73-1) O you the (sleeping) enwrapped one! (1)

(1) To address the Prophet (peace be upon him) with these words and then to command him to rise and keep standing in the Prayer at night, shows that at the time he either lay asleep, or had wrapped himself up in a sheet in order to go to sleep. Here, to address him with: O you who sleeps wrapped up instead of with: O Prophet, or O Messenger, is a fine way of address, which by itself gives the meaning: Gone is the time when you used to enjoy peaceful sleep at will; now you lie under the burden of a great mission, whose demands and duties are different as well as onerous.

قُمِ الَّيْلَ اِلَّا قَلِيْلًا ۙ٢

(73-2) Stand up in Prayer by night, all but a small part of it; (2)

(2) This can have two meanings:

(1) Pass the night standing up in the Prayer and spend only a little of it in sleep.

(2) There is no demand from you to pass the whole night in the Prayer, but have rest as well and spend a little part of the night in worship too.

But in view of the theme that follows the first meaning seems to be more relevant, and the same is supported by (Surah Ad-Dahr, Ayat 26), in which it has been said: Prostrate yourself before

Him in the night and glorify Him during the long hours of night.

نِّصْفَهٗۤ اَوِ انْقُصْ مِنْهُ قَلِيْلًا ۙ﴿۳﴾

(73-3) half of it, or reduce it a little;

اَوْ زِدْ عَلَيْهِ وَرَتِّلِ الْقُرْاٰنَ تَرْتِيْلًا ۚ﴿۴﴾

(73-4) or add to it a little; [3] and recite the Qur'an slowly and distinctly. [4]

(3) This is an explanation of the duration of time commanded to be spent in worship. In it the Prophet (peace be upon him) was given the option to spend half of the night in the Prayer, or a little less than that, or a little more than that. But the style shows that half the night has been regarded as preferable, for the measure is the same, which may be decreased or increased, as the people may like and choose.

(4) Recite the Quran: Do not recite it quickly and in haste, but slowly and distinctly: pause at every verse so that the mind understands the meaning and purport of divine revelation well and takes effect from it. if it contains the mention of Allah’s Being and Attributes, it may awe-inspire the heart with His glory and majesty. If it expresses His mercy, the heart may be filled with feelings of gratitude to Him. If it mentions His wrath and His punishment, the heart may be overwhelmed by fear of Him. If it enjoins something or forbids something, one may understand what has been enjoined and what has been forbidden. In short, the recital does not only consist in uttering the words with the tongue, but it should involve thoughtful consideration of the meaning. When Anas was asked about the Prophet’s (peace be upon him) method of reciting the Quran, he replied: The Messenger (peace be upon him) stretched the words when reciting them. For example, when he recited Bismillahir-Rahmanir-Rahim, he would stretch and prolong the sound of Allah, Rahman and Rahim (Bukhari). When Umm Salamah was

asked the same question, she replied that the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited every verse separately and distinctly and observed a pause at the end of every verse. For instance, he recited Al-hamdu-lillahi Rabbil-alamin, and paused, then recited ar-Rahmanir- Rahim, and paused, and then recited Maliki-yaumid-din. (Musnad Ahmad, Abu Daud, Tirmidhi). In another tradition, Umm Salamah has stated that the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited each word distinctly and clearly. (Tirmidhi, Nasai). Hudhaifah bin Yaman says: Once I stood beside the Prophet (peace be upon him) in the night Prayer to see how he recited the Quran. I noticed that he glorified Allah where He should be glorified, invoked and supplicated Allah where He should be invoked and supplicated, and sought refuge of Allah where His refuge should be sought. (Muslim, Nasai). Abu Dharr has stated that once during the night Prayer when the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to the sentence: in-to-adhdhib-hum ... (If You punish them, then they are Your servants; and if You forgive them, then You are Almighty, All-Wise), he went on repeating it over and over again until it became dawn. (Musnad Ahmad, Bukhari).

اِنَّا سَنُلْقِیۡ عَلَیۡکَ قَوۡلًا ثَقِیۡلًا ۝۵

(73-5) Behold, We shall cast upon you a Weighty Word. (5)

(5) That is, you are being commanded to stand up in the night Prayer because We are going to send down on you a weighty word, to bear the burden of which you must develop necessary power in yourself, and you can develop this power only by abandoning your ease and comfort of the night and by standing up in the Prayer and passing half the night or thereabout in the worship of your Lord. The Quran has also been called a weighty word for the reason that acting on its commands, demonstrating its teaching practically, extending its invitation in the face of the whole world, and bringing about a revolution in the entire system of belief and thought, morals and manners, civilization and social life, according to it, is indeed the weightiest task any human being ever has been charged with. It has also been called a weighty word because bearing the burden of its revelation was a difficult and heavy duty. Zaid bin Thabit says: Once revelation came down upon the Prophet (peace be upon him) in a state when he was resting his head upon my knee. I felt such a pressure of the weight on my knee that I thought it would break. Aishah says: I have seen the state of the Prophet's receiving revelation during intense cold, drops of perspiration started falling from his forehead. (Bukhari, Muslim, Malik, Tirmidhi, Nasai). In another tradition Aishah has stated: Whenever revelation came down on the Prophet (peace be upon him) while he was riding on his she-camel, the she-camel would be forced to rest her chest on the ground and could not move until the revelation was over. (Musnad Ahmad, Hakim, Ibn Jarir).

اِنَّ نَاشِئَةَ الَّيۡلِ هِىَ اَشَدُّ وَطۡـئًا وَّاَقۡوَمُ قِيۡلًا ۝٦

(73-6) Surely getting up at night [6] is the best means of subduing the self [7] and is more suitable for uprightness in speech. [8]

(6) About the meaning of the word nashiat allail, as used in the original, the commentators and lexicographers have expressed four different viewpoints:

(1) That nashiat implies the person himself who rises at night.

(2) That it implies the hours of night.

(3) That it means the rising by night.

(4) That it does not only apply to the rising in the night but rising after having had some sleep.

Aishah and Mujahid have adopted this fourth viewpoint.

(7) The word ashaddu wat-an as used in the text is so vast in meaning that it cannot be explained in any one sentence. Its one meaning is: As the rising for worship by night and standing up for a long time in the Prayer is against human nature and the self of man seeks ease and comfort at that time, this act is an exercise which is most effective in controlling and disciplining the self. The person who governs himself by this method and gains dominance over his body and mind becomes able to use his power in the way of God, can work more efficiently and firmly to make the message of true faith prevail in the world. The second meaning is: This is a very effective means of producing harmony and concord between the heart and the tongue, for during these hours of the night none else intervenes between the servant and his God, and whatever man utters with his tongue in this state, is the very voice of his heart. The third meaning is: This is a very efficacious means of bringing about conformity between the exterior and the interior of man, for the person who in the solitude of the night would abandon his comfort and ease and arise for

worship, would do so only out of sincerity: there can be no tinge of display and hypocrisy in this. The fourth meaning is: As this worship is harder on man than the worship of the daytime, it develops steadfastness in him: he is enabled to walk in the path of God more firmly and can face and endure the hardships of that way with greater constancy and determination.

(8) Literally, Makes the speech most upright and sound. But the purport is to say that at that time man can read the Quran with greater peace of mind, attention and understanding. Ibn Abbas has explained it thus: That it is the most suitable time for man to ponder over the Quran well. (Abu Daud).

اِنَّ لَکَ فِی النَّہَارِ سَبۡحًا طَوِیۡلًا ۚ﴿۷﴾

(73-7) You are indeed much occupied during the day with the affairs of the world.

وَاذۡکُرِ اسۡمَ رَبِّکَ وَ تَبَتَّلۡ اِلَیۡہِ تَبۡتِیۡلًا ؕ﴿۸﴾

(73-8) So remember the name of your Lord (9) and devote yourself to Him with exclusive devotion.

(9) After making mention of the occupation of the daytime, the exhortation to remember the name of your Lord by itself gives the meaning: Never be heedless of the remembrance of your Lord even when you are deeply involved in your worldly occupations, and continue to commemorate His name in one way or another at all times. (For explanation, see (E.N. 63 of Surah Al-Ahzab).

رَبُّ الۡمَشۡرِقِ وَ الۡمَغۡرِبِ لَاۤ اِلٰہَ اِلَّا ہُوَ فَاتَّخِذۡہُ وَکِیۡلًا ﴿۹﴾

(73-9) He is the Lord of the East and the West; there is no god but He. So take Him alone for your Guardian, (10)

(10) Wakil is a person in whom one has complete faith; so much so that one can entrust all his affairs to him with full satisfaction of the heart. Thus, the verse means: Do not feel distressed at the hardships that you are experiencing at the storm

of opposition that has been provoked by your invitation to the faith. Your Lord is He Who is the Owner of the East and the West, (i.e. of the whole universe) besides Whom no one else possesses the powers of Godhead. Entrust your affair to Him and be satisfied that He will fight your case, He will deal with your opponents, and He will look after all your interests well.

وَاصْبِرْ عَلٰى مَا يَقُوْلُوْنَ وَاهْجُرْهُمْ هَجْرًا جَمِيْلًا ۝١٠

(73-10) He is the Lord of the East and the West; there is no god but He. So take Him alone for your Guardian, (10)

(10) Wakil is a person in whom one has complete faith; so much so that one can entrust all his affairs to him with full satisfaction of the heart. Thus, the verse means: Do not feel distressed at the hardships that you are experiencing at the storm of opposition that has been provoked by your invitation to the faith. Your Lord is He Who is the Owner of the East and the West, (i.e. of the whole universe) besides Whom no one else possesses the powers of Godhead. Entrust your affair to Him and be satisfied that He will fight your case, He will deal with your opponents, and He will look after all your interests well.

وَ ذَرْنِىْ وَ الْمُكَذِّبِيْنَ اُولِى النَّعْمَةِ وَ مَهِّلْهُمْ قَلِيْلًا ۝١١

(73-11) Leave it to Me to deal with the affluent ones who give the lie (12) (to the Truth), and bear with them for a while.

(12) These words clearly contain the sense that the people, who were actually denying the Prophet (peace be upon him) in Makkah and were inciting the common people to oppose and resist him by stirring up prejudices and by deceit and fraud, were the well-to-do, prosperous and affluent people, for it was their interests, which were being hit by the reforming message of Islam. The Quran tells us that this was not peculiar only to the Prophet's case but in every age this very class of the people have been the main obstacle to every movement of reform. For example, see (Surah Al-Araf, Ayats 60, 66, 75, 88); (Surah Al-Muminun, Ayat 33); (Surah Saba, Ayats 34, 35); (Surah Az-Zukhruf, Ayat 23).

اِنَّ لَدَ يۡنَاۤ اَنۡكَالًا وَّ جَحِيۡمًا ۙ﴿۱۲﴾

(73-12) We have heavy fetters [13] and a blazing Fire in store for them;

(13) Heavy shackles in Hell will not be put on the criminals' feet to stop them from escape but in order that they are not able to stand up and move; these will not be used to prevent their escape but as an instrument of their torment.

وَّ طَعَامًا ذَا غُصَّةٍ وَّ عَذَابًا اَلِيۡمًا ۙ﴿۱۳﴾

(73-13) and a food that chokes, and a grievous chastisement.

يَوۡمَ تَرۡجُفُ الۡاَرۡضُ وَ الۡجِبَالُ وَ كَانَتِ الۡجِبَالُ كَثِيۡبًا مَّهِيۡلًا ﴿۱۴﴾

(73-14) (They will come across all this) on the Day when the earth and the mountains shall tremble violently and the mountains shall crumble into heaps of scattered sand. [14]

(14) Since at that time the cohesive force to bind the parts of the mountains together will cease to work, first they will become like crumbling dunes of fine sand, then because of the earthquake which will be shaking the earth; the sand will scatter and shift and the whole earth will turn into an empty level plain. This last state has been described in (Surah Ta Ha, Ayats 105-107), thus: They ask you, where will the mountains go on that Day. Say: My Lord will reduce them to fine dust and scatter it away. He will turn the earth into an empty level plain, wherein you will neither see any curve no crease.

اِنَّاۤ اَرۡسَلۡنَاۤ اِلَيۡكُمۡ رَسُوۡلًا شَاهِدًا عَلَيۡكُمۡ كَمَاۤ اَرۡسَلۡنَاۤ اِلٰى فِرۡعَوۡنَ رَسُوۡلًا ؕ﴿۱۵﴾

(73-15) Surely [15] We have sent to you a Messenger as a witness over you, [16] just as We had sent a Messenger to Pharaoh.

(15) The address now turns to the disbelievers of Makkah, who were denying the Prophet (peace be upon him) and persecuting him relentlessly.

(16) Sending the Prophet (peace be upon him) to be a witness over the people also means that he should testify to the truth by his word and deed before them in the world and also that in the Hereafter when Allah's court is established, he will testify that he had presented the whole truth before the people in the world. (For further explanation, see (E.N. 144 of Surah Al-Baqarah); (E.N. 64 of Surah An-Nisa); (Surah An-Nahl, Ayats 84, 89); (E.N. 82 of Surah Al-Ahzab); (E.N. 14 of Surah Al-Fath).

فَعَصٰى فِرْعَوْنُ الرَّسُوْلَ فَاَخَذْنٰهُ اَخْذًا وَّبِيْلًا ١٦

(73-16) But Pharaoh disobeyed Our Messenger, so We seized him with a terrible seizing.

فَكَيْفَ تَتَّقُوْنَ اِنْ كَفَرْتُمْ يَوْمًا يَّجْعَلُ الْوِلْدٰنَ شِيْبًا ١٧

(73-17) If you persist in disbelieving, how will you guard yourself against the (woe of the) Day that will turn children grey-haired, (17)

(17) That is, in the first place, you should be afraid that if you do not accept the invitation of the Messenger (peace be upon him) sent by Us, you will have to meet the same evil end in this world, which the Pharaoh has already met in consequence of this very crime. But even if no torment is sent on you in the world, how will you save yourselves from the punishment of the Day of Resurrection.

السَّمَآءُ مُنفَطِرٌۢ ۚ كَانَ وَعْدُهٗ مَفْعُوْلًا ١٨

(73-18) the Day whose severity shall cause the heaven to split asunder? Allah's promise is ever bound to be fulfilled.

اِنَّ هٰذِهٖ تَذْكِرَةٌ ۚ فَمَنْ شَآءَ اتَّخَذَ اِلٰى رَبِّهٖ سَبِيْلًا ١٩

(73-19) Indeed this is nothing but a Good Counsel; so let him who will take a way leading to his Lord.

اِنَّ رَبَّكَ يَعْلَمُ اَنَّكَ تَقُوْمُ اَدْنٰى مِنْ ثُلُثَيِ الَّيْلِ وَنِصْفَهٗ وَثُلُثَهٗ وَطَآئِفَةٌ مِّنَ الَّذِيْنَ مَعَكَ ۭ وَاللّٰهُ يُقَدِّرُ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ ۭ عَلِمَ اَنْ لَّنْ تُحْصُوْهُ فَتَابَ عَلَيْكُمْ ۠ فَاقْرَءُوْا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنَ الْقُرْاٰنِ ۭ عَلِمَ اَنْ سَيَكُوْنُ مِنْكُمْ مَّرْضٰى ۙ وَاٰخَرُوْنَ يَضْرِبُوْنَ فِي الْاَرْضِ يَبْتَغُوْنَ مِنْ فَضْلِ اللّٰهِ ۙ وَاٰخَرُوْنَ يُقَاتِلُوْنَ فِيْ سَبِيْلِ اللّٰهِ فَاقْرَءُوْا مَا تَيَسَّرَ مِنْهُ ۣ وَاَقِيْمُوا الصَّلٰوةَ وَاٰتُوا الزَّكٰوةَ وَاَقْرِضُوا اللّٰهَ قَرْضًا حَسَنًا ۭ وَمَا تُقَدِّمُوْا لِاَنْفُسِكُمْ مِّنْ خَيْرٍ تَجِدُوْهُ عِنْدَ اللّٰهِ هُوَ خَيْرًا وَّاَعْظَمَ اَجْرًا ۭ وَاسْتَغْفِرُوا اللّٰهَ ۭ اِنَّ اللّٰهَ غَفُوْرٌ رَّحِيْمٌ ٢٠

(73-20) (O Prophet), [18] your Lord knows that you sometimes stand up in Prayer nearly two-thirds of the night, and sometimes half or one-third of it, [19] and so does a party of those with you; [20] Allah measures the night and the day. He knows that you cannot keep an accurate count of it, so He has shown mercy to you. So now recite as much of the Qur'an as you can. [21] He knows that there are among you those who are sick and others who are journeying in the land in quest of Allah's bounty, [22] and still others who are fighting in the cause of Allah. [23] So recite as much of the Qur'an as you easily can, and establish Prayer, and pay Zakah, [24] and give Allah a goodly loan.[25] Whatever good you send forth for yourselves, you shall find it with Allah. That is better and its reward is greater. [26] And ask for Allah's forgiveness; surely He is Most Forgiving, Most Compassionate.

(18) About this verse in which reduction has been made in the injunction concerning the tahajjud Prayer, there are different

traditions. Musnad Ahmad, Muslim and Abu Daud have related a tradition, on the authority of Aishah, saying that this second command was sent down one year after the first command, and the standing up in the Prayer at night was made voluntary instead of obligatory. Another tradition which Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim have related, again on the authority of Aishah, says that this command came down eight months after the first command, and a third tradition which Ibn Abi Hatim has related again from her, says that it came down sixteen months later. Abu Daud, Ibn Jarir and Ibn Abi Hatim have cited the period of one year from Abdullah bin Abbas. But Saeed bin Jubair has stated that it was sent down ten years later. (Ibn Jarir, Ibn Abi Hatim). In our opinion this last view is most sound, for the subject matter of the first section clearly shows that it was sent down in Makkah and that too in the earliest stage when at the most four years might have passed since the advent of Prophethood. Contrary to this, this second section, in view of the express evidence of its subject matter, seems to have been revealed at Al-Madinah when fighting had started with the disbelievers and the zakat also had been enjoined as an obligatory duty. On this basis inevitably the two sections should have been sent down at an interval of at least ten years between them.

(19) Although the initial command to the Prophet (peace be upon him) was to keep standing up in the Prayer for half the night, or thereabout, it was difficult to compute the time precisely in the absorption of the Prayer, especially when there were no watches either to measure time accurately; therefore, sometimes two thirds of the night passed in the prayer and sometimes only one-third of it.

(20) In the initial command only the Prophet (peace be upon him) was addressed and only he was instructed to stand up in the Prayer by night. But since the Muslims at that time were ardently desirous of following him in everything he did and of earning

more and more good and virtues, many of the companions also performed this night Prayer regularly.

(21) As the Prayer is prolonged due mainly to a lengthy recital of the Quran, it is said: You may recite as much of the Quran as you easily can in the tahajjud Prayer This would automatically cause the Prayer to be shortened. Although the words here are apparently in the imperative mood, it is agreed by all that tahajjud is not an obligatory but a voluntary Prayer. In the Hadith, it has also been explained that on an enquiry by a person the Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Five times Prayer in the day and night is obligatory on you. He asked: Is anything besides this is also binding on me. The Prophet said: No, unless you may like to offer something of your own accord. (Bukhari, Muslim). This verse also shows another thing. Just as the bowing (ruku) and prostration (sajdah) are obligatory in the Prayer, so is the recital of the Quran. For just as Allah at other places has used the words ruku and sajdah for the prayer, so here He has mentioned recital of the Quran, which implies its recital in the Prayer. If somebody objects to this conclusion, saying: When the tahajjud Prayer itself is voluntary, how can recital of the Quran in it be obligatory? The answer is: Even in case of the voluntary Prayer it is incumbent on one to fulfill all the pre-requisites of the Prayer and to perform all its basic elements and obligatory parts. No one can say that in case of the voluntary Prayer, purity of the garments and body, ablutions and concealment of the satar (minimal part of the body to be covered) are not obligatory, and the standing up and sitting and performance of ruku and sajdah in it are also only voluntary.

(22) Travelling to earn one’s living by lawful and permissible methods has been described in many places in the Quran as the seeking of Allah’s bounty.

(23) Here, the way Allah has made mention of seeking pure livelihood and fighting in the way of Allah together and declared these two, besides the compulsion on account of illness, as

reasons for exemption from the tahajjud Prayer, or concession in it, shows how meritorious it is in Islam to earn one's livelihood by lawful methods. In the Hadith, Abdullah bin Masud has reported that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: The person who came to a city of the Muslims with food grains and sold it at the rate of the day, will attain to a place nearest to Allah, and then the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited this very verse. (Ibn Marduyah). Umar once said: Except for fighting in the way of Allah, the state in which I would love to be overtaken by death, is the state when I am overtaken by it while passing through a mountain pass in search of livelihood and then he recited this very verse. (Baihaqi, Shuab al-Iman).

(24) Commentators agree that this implies observance of the obligatory Prayer five times a day and giving away of the obligatory zakat.

(25) Ibn Zaid says this implies spending one's wealth in the cause of Allah besides the zakat, whether it is in the cause of fighting in the way of Allah, or for helping the needy, or for public utilities, or other good works. The meaning of giving to Allah a good loan has been explained at several places above. See (E.N. 267 of Surah Al-Baqarah); (E.N. 33 of Surah Al-Maidah); (E.N. 16 of Surah Al-Hadid).

(26) It means: Whatever you have sent forward for the good of your Hereafter is more beneficial for you than what you withheld in the world and did not spend in any good cause for the pleasure of Allah. According to a Hadith reported by Abdullah bin Masud the Prophet (peace be upon him) once asked: Which of you has a greater love for his own wealth than for the wealth of his heir. The people said: There is none among us, O Messenger of Allah, who would not have greater love for his own wealth than for the wealth of his heir. He said: Consider well what you are saying. The people submitted: This indeed is our considered opinion, O

Messenger of Allah. Thereupon the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Your own property is only that which you have sent forward (for the good of your Hereafter), and whatever you held back, indeed belongs to the heir. (Bukhari. Nasai, Musnad Abu Yala).